

IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly cancel claims 2-6, and amend claims 1 and 8-12 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of producing sparkling low alcohol content sake comprising the steps of:

saccharifying and fermenting steamed rice and malted rice (koji) ~~in the presence of one or more acids to produce low alcohol content unrefined sake (moromi);~~ under the conditions that acidity exceeds 3.5 for at least one moment in the process during a stage of unrefined sake (moromi); wherein acidity is a titratable amount (ml.) with 0.1 N NaOH needed to neutralize 10ml of Japanese sake;

filtering ~~said a part of~~ low alcohol content alcoholic unrefined sake (moromi) with a coarse mesh filter; or centrifuging the same, ~~so as to separate turbid liquid filtrate having fermentation activity containing yeast contained therein from a first clear liquid filtrate;~~

~~further separating a second clear~~ a clear liquid filtrate from the turbid liquid filtrate having fermentation activity containing yeast by compressed filtration of said turbid liquid filtrate another part of said low alcoholic unrefined sake (morami) by compressed filtration; and

blending said turbid liquid filtrate and ~~the first and second~~ said clear liquid filtrate ~~obtained in the above two steps, to produce a fermentation liquid, in a sealed vessel within a closed system;~~ and

~~fermenting the fermentation liquid.~~ in a vessel and airtightly sealing said vessel.

2-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Withdrawn) The sparkling low alcohol content sake according to claim 6, wherein the absorbancy at 660 nm is in the range between 0 and 0.01.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of producing sparkling low alcohol content sake according to claim 1, wherein the turbid liquid filtrate ~~unrefined sake (moremi)~~ and ~~the first and second clear liquid filtrates~~ liquid filtrate are blended in a blend ratio of from 1:10 to 1:30.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of producing sparkling low alcohol content sake according to claim 1, wherein fermentation is carried out ~~for~~ from 5 days to 2 weeks.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of producing sparkling low alcohol content sake according to claim ~~1~~ 9, wherein fermentation is carried out at a temperature of from 6°C to 10°C.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of producing sparkling low alcohol content sake according to claim ~~1~~ 9, wherein fermentation is carried out for 2 weeks at 10°C.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of producing sparkling low alcohol content sake according to claim ~~1~~ 9, wherein the saccharifying and fermenting of steamed rice and malted rice (koji) is carried out in the presence of lactic acid.

Kindly add new Claims 13-16 as follows:

13. (New) The method of producing sparkling low alcohol content sake according to claim 1, wherein fermentation is continued until an inner gas pressure in the vessel produced by fermentation reaches 2 – 5 kg/cm².

14. (New) The method of producing sparkling low alcohol content sake according to claim 1, wherein fermentation liquid is filtered within a closed system, and the clear liquid filtrate is sealed within the vessel when said turbid liquid filtrate and said clear liquid filtrate are blended and fermented in the sealed vessel, and fermented liquid in the sealed vessel reaches an alcoholic concentration of 4 – 6% by vol., Japanese sake scaling between -70 and -90, an acidity of 3 – 4, and an inner gas pressure in the sealed vessel is 2 -5 kg/cm².

15. (New) The method of producing sparkling low alcohol content sake according to claim 13, wherein after sealing of the vessel, pasteurization is conducted when the liquid therein reaches an alcoholic content of 4 – 6% by vol., Japanese sake scaling of between -70 and -90, and an acidity of 3 – 4.

16. (New) The method of producing sparkling low alcohol content sake according to claim 14, wherein carbon dioxide is added into the said clear liquid filtrate, which is then bottled.